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Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"
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Agenda item 2
Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action

Proposed outcome document submitted by the Chairperson of the preparatory committee

II. Achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the twelve critical areas of the Platform for Action

[Assessment of achievements and obstacles must be made in relation to the commitments made in the *Beijing* Platform for Action and its 12 critical areas, namely by looking into the actions taken and the results attained, as indicated in national reports as well as in reports of the Secretary-General, *[the results of regional meetings held in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly]* and other relevant sources. Such assessment shows that, even though significant positive developments can be identified, barriers remain and there is still the need to further implement the goals and commitments made in Beijing. The summary of achievements and of persistent or new obstacles can, therefore, constitute a global framework for the identification of further actions and initiatives to *[overcome obstacles and] to* achieve the full *[and accelerated]* implementation of the Platform for Action at all levels and in all areas.]

A. Women and poverty

4. **Achievements:** Considerable progress has been achieved in increasing recognition of gender dimensions of poverty and in the recognition that gender equality is one of the factors of specific importance for eradicating poverty particularly in relation to the feminization of poverty. Efforts have been made to integrate a gender perspective into poverty eradication policies and programmes by Governments, in cooperation with non-governmental

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organizations (NGOs). Multilateral, international and regional financial institutions are also giving increased attention to the incorporation of a gender perspective into their policies. Progress has been made by pursuing a two-pronged approach of promoting employment and income-generating activities for women and providing access to basic social services, including education and health care. Micro-credit and other financial instruments for women have emerged as a successful strategy for economic empowerment and have widened economic opportunities for some women living in poverty in particular in rural areas. Policy development has taken account of the particular needs of female-headed households. Research has enhanced the understanding of the differing impacts of poverty on women and men and tools have been developed to assist with this assessment. **AGREED**

[Policies and programmes have been implemented to strengthen the family in performing its societal and developmental roles, including the recognition of the vital role of women in the family and gender equality as essential to family well-being.]

5. **Obstacles:** Many factors have contributed to widening economic inequality between women and men, including income inequality, unemployment and deepening of poverty levels of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Debt burdens, **[high/excessive]** military spending, **[inconsistent with national security requirements, unilateral coercive measures not in accordance with international law and Charter of the United Nations, [~~national and ethnic conflicts~~] [armed conflicts of international and non-international character,] [~~sanctions~~, foreign occupation], [sanctions, terrorism,]** low levels of **[official development assistance and the unfulfilled commitment to meet the yet to be attained internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of developed countries for overall]** official development assistance as well as the lack of efficient use of resources, among other factors can hinder **have thwarted** national efforts to combat poverty.)

[Lack of remuneration of reproductive and [social] work], [gender disparities in economic power-sharing], unequal access to **[and control over]** capital, resources and labour markets as well as socio-cultural practices **[and unequal distribution of unremunerated work between women and men], [*the absence* of efficient gender-oriented programmes, and the consequences for income-related social security systems]** hinder women's economic empowerment and exacerbate the feminization of poverty.

[In addition, gender inequalities and disparities in economic power-sharing, unequal distribution of unremunerated work between women and men, lack of technological and financial support for women's entrepreneurship, unequal access to, and control over, capital and resources, in particular land and credit and access to labour markets, as well as all negative social and traditional practices, have thwarted women's economic empowerment and exacerbated the feminization of poverty.]

[The negative consequences of globalization and structural adjustment programmes, high costs of external debt servicing and declining terms of international trade have worsened the existing obstacles to development, aggravating the feminization of poverty, particularly in the developing countries. In this context, the economic crisis that has hit several countries has had a devastating impact on women and has further increased the feminization of poverty.]

[There is wide recognition of the need for collective action to anticipate and offset the negative social and economic consequences of globalization and to maximize its benefits for all members of society, including those with special needs. For most developing countries, the terms of international trade have worsened and inflows of concessional financial resources have declined. The high debt burden has weakened the capacity of many Governments to service their increasing external debt and has eroded resources available for social development. Inappropriate design of structural adjustment programmes has weakened the management capacity of public institutions as well as the ability of Governments to respond to the social development needs of the weak and vulnerable in society and to provide adequate social services, aggravating the feminization of poverty.] Fundamental economic restructuring experienced by the countries with economies in transition has led to lack of resources for poverty-eradication programmes aimed at empowerment of women.**]**

B. Education and training of women

6. **Achievements**: There is an increased awareness that education is one of the most valuable means of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Progress was achieved in women's and girls education and training at all levels, especially where there was sufficient political commitment and resource allocation. Measures were taken in all regions to initiate alternative education and training systems to reach women and girls in indigenous communities and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups to encourage them to pursue all fields of study, in particular non-traditional fields of study, and to remove gender biases from education and training. **AGREED**

7. **Obstacles**: In some countries, efforts to eradicate illiteracy and strengthen literacy among women and girls and to increase their access to all levels and types of education were constrained by the lack of **[political will and]** resources to improve educational infrastructure and undertake educational reforms; persisting gender discrimination and bias, including in teacher training; gender-based occupational stereotyping in schools, institutions of further education and communities; lack of childcare facilities; persistent use of gender stereotypes in educational materials; and insufficient attention paid to the link between women's enrolment in higher educational institutions and labour market dynamics. The remote location of some communities and in some cases inadequate salaries and benefits make attracting and retaining teaching professionals difficult and can result in lower quality education. Additionally, in a number of countries, economic, social and infrastructural barriers, as well as traditional discriminatory practices, have contributed to a lower enrolment and retention rates for girls. Little progress has been made in eradicating illiteracy in some developing countries, aggravating women's inequality at economic, social and political levels. [In some **of these** countries, **the application of structural adjustment policies has** had a particularly severe impact on the education sector, since it has resulted in declining investment in the education infrastructure.]

C. Women and health

8. **Achievements:** Programmes have been implemented to create awareness among policy makers and planners on the need for health programmes covering all aspects of women's health throughout their life cycle, which have contributed to an increase in life expectancy in many countries. There is increased attention to high mortality rates among women and girls as a result of malaria, tuberculosis, water-borne diseases, communicable and diarrhoeal diseases and malnutrition; [increased attention to sexual and reproductive health and **[sexual and]** reproductive **[rights]** of women]**[as adopted in the report of the International Conference on Population and Development]** [The twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, held from 30 June to 2 July 1999, reviewed achievements and adopted key action in the field of women's health for further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development] increased knowledge and use of family planning [and/including] contraceptive methods [/family planning, including contraceptive methods, and methods to protect against sexually transmitted infections] as well as increased awareness among men of their responsibility in family planning and contraceptive methods and their use; increased attention to breast-feeding, nutrition and the health of infants and mothers; **increased attention to sexually transmitted infections and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection among women and girls;** introduced a gender perspective in health and health related educational and physical activities and gender-specific prevention and rehabilitation programmes on substance abuse, including tobacco, drugs and alcohol; increased attention to women's mental health, health conditions at work, environmental considerations and recognition of the specific health needs of older women.

9. **Obstacles**: **[Worldwide, the gap between and within rich and poor countries with respect to maternal mortality and morbidity rates, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health problems, as well as infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoeal diseases and [chronic non-transmittable diseases/ cardio-vascular and pulmonary diseases], remains unacceptable.]**

The absence of a holistic **[and rights-based]** approach to health and health care for women and girls throughout the life-cycle has constrained progress **[and the lack of development and financial resources**

continues to affect the capacity of many developing countries to provide and expand quality health care.] The predominant focus of health care systems on treating illness rather than maintaining optimal health also prevents a holistic approach. **[Some women continue to encounter barriers to their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health.]** There is, in some countries, insufficient attention to the role of social and economic determinants of health; **[a lack of access to clean water, adequate nutrition and safe sanitation]**; a lack of gender-specific health research and technology; insufficient gender sensitivity in the provision of health information and **[health care/services]**, including those related to environmental and occupational health hazards **[affecting women in developing and developed countries;] [Poverty and]** A shortage of financial and human resources as well as, in some cases, **[restructuring of the health sector and/or the increasing trend to privatization of] [health care/services]** has resulted in poor quality, reduced and insufficient **[health care/services]**, and has also led to less attention to the health of the most vulnerable groups of women. **[Barriers [such as a power imbalance [on safe and responsible sex practices/in negotiating sexual activities/behaviour/relations]] and [failure of dialogue/lack of communication] between men and women, [affect women's access to health care and education, especially in relation to prevention/endanger women's health, particularly by increasing their susceptibility to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS]. [Taking into account the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents] Adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, continue to lack access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services/care.]**

[Alternative: Women often do not enjoy the full participation and partnership that is required in productive and reproductive life and are often left to bear sole responsibility for their sexual and reproductive health.]

[The adjustment of legal regulations and programmes to international standards/agreed targets and commitments [in particular in relation to sexual and reproductive health/women's health] remained limited.] Despite progress in some countries, the rates of maternal mortality and morbidity remain unacceptably high in most countries. Investment in essential obstetric care remains insufficient in many countries. **[There continues to be a lack of information on and access to appropriate, affordable and quality health care and health services, including sexual and reproductive health care [which includes family planning information and services] as well as a lack of prevention, screening and treatment for breast, cervical and ovarian cancers and osteoporosis.] [The testing and development of male contraceptives is still insufficient.] [While some progress has been made, many countries have not [reviewed/yet considered reviewing] laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions [nor provided post-abortion counselling, education and family planning services that would help to avoid repeat abortions].] [In circumstances where abortion is not against the law, some countries still do not provide those abortion and post-abortion services.]** The rising incidence of tobacco use among women, in particular young women, has increased their risk of cancer and other serious diseases, as well as gender-specific risks from tobacco and environmental tobacco smoke. **[In some countries, endemic, chronic and communicable diseases, including malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diarrhoeal and water-borne diseases, continue to take a toll on women and girls. In other countries, cardio/pulmonary diseases remain the leading cause of mortality among women.] [Many health professionals continue to fail to observe medical ethics when providing services for women and girls, often failing to respect their [human] rights.] [The particular unmet needs of women caused by] the unequal burden placed on [them] [women] as health care providers within families.] [The impact of the long-term and large-scale environmental problems, especially in Central Asia and other regions, is affecting the health and well-being of individuals and limiting progress in development.]**

D. Violence against women

10. **Achievements: [There is increased awareness that violence against women and girls is not a private matter, but a human rights violation, and an increased commitment to prevent and combat violence against women and girls. Improved policies and programmes have been developed, including**

domestic violence being recognized as a criminal act in a number of countries, with an increased focus on holding the perpetrator accountable.] [There is increased awareness and commitment to preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, which violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, through, *inter alia*, improved legislation, policies and programmes.] Governments have initiated policy reforms and mechanisms such as inter-departmental committees, guidelines and protocols, national, multidisciplinary and coordinated programmes to address violence. Some Governments have also introduced or reformed laws to protect women and girls from all forms of violence and laws to prosecute the perpetrators. There is increasing recognition at all levels that all forms of violence against women seriously affect their health. Health care providers are seen to have a significant role to play in addressing this matter. Some progress has been made in the provision of services for abused women and children, including legal services, shelters, special health services and counselling, hot lines and police units with special training. Education on this subject is being promoted for law enforcement personnel, members of the judiciary, health care providers and welfare workers. Educational materials for women and public awareness campaigns have been developed and research on the root causes of violence is being carried out. There is increasing research and specialized studies being conducted on gender roles, in particular on the role of men and boys, and on all forms of violence against women, as well as on the situation of and impact on children growing up in families where violence occurs. **[Successful cooperation has been achieved between governmental and NGOs in the field of preventing violence against women.]** The active support of civil society, in particular women's organizations and NGOs, has had an important role, *inter alia*, in promoting awareness-raising campaigns and in the provision of support services to women victims of violence. Efforts towards the eradication of harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation, which is a form of violence against women, has received national, regional and international policy support. Many Governments have introduced educational and outreach programmes, as well as legislative measures criminalizing these practices. In addition, this support includes the appointment of a Special Ambassador for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

11. **Obstacles**: Women continue to be victims of various forms of violence. Inadequate understanding of the root causes of all forms of violence against women and girls hinders efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls. There is a lack of **[multi-focused/ comprehensive]** programmes dealing with the perpetrators, **[including programmes, where appropriate, which would enable them to solve problems without violence.]** Inadequate data on violence further impede informed policy-making and analysis. Socio-cultural attitudes that are discriminatory and economic inequalities reinforce women's subordinate place in society. **[This makes women and girls vulnerable to many forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation, so-called honour crimes, rape, marital rape, incest and forced marriages. There is an absence of a coordinated multidisciplinary approach to responding to violence, which includes the health system, work places, the media, the education system as well as the justice system. Domestic violence, including sexual violence in marriage/marital rape, is still treated as a private matter in some countries. Insufficient awareness of the consequences of domestic violence, how to prevent it and the rights of victims still exists.]** Although improving, the legal and legislative measures, especially in the criminal justice area, to eliminate different forms of violence against women and children, including domestic violence **[and pornography]**, are weak in many countries.

[Prevention strategies also remain fragmented and reactive and there are too few programmes on these issues. It is also noted that problems have arisen from the use of new information and communication technologies for [trafficking in women and girls and for purposes of economic and sexual exploitation] [for prostitution, paedophelia, pornography and trafficking in women and girls.]

E. Women and armed conflict

12. **Achievements**: There is a wider recognition that armed conflict has different impacts on women and men **[and that a gender sensitive application of international human rights and humanitarian law is**

important.] Steps have been taken at the national and international levels to address abuses against women, including increased attention to ending impunity for crimes against women in situations of armed conflict.

The work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has been an important contribution to addressing violence against women in the context of armed conflict. **[The adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which includes gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence and affirms that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and other forms of sexual violence constitute, in defined circumstances, a crime against humanity and a war crime, has a significant importance.]**

Women's contribution in peace-building, peacemaking and conflict resolution is being increasingly recognized. Education and training on non-violent, conflict resolution have been introduced. Progress has been made on the dissemination and implementation of the guidelines for the protection of refugee **[and displaced]** women. Gender-based persecution has been accepted as a basis for refugee status in some countries. There is recognition by Governments, the international community and organizations, in particular the United Nations, **[of the gender-differentiated experiences of humanitarian emergencies] [that more financial and other resources are necessary to provide]** and of the importance of a more holistic support for refugee women who have suffered all forms of abuse, including gender-specific abuse, to ensure equal access to appropriate and adequate food and nutrition, clean water, safe sanitation, shelter, education and social and health services, including reproductive health care and maternity care. There is greater recognition of the need to integrate a gender perspective in the planning, design and implementation of [humanitarian **assistance/relief** activities] **[including assistance and relief.] [and to provide adequate resources.]** Humanitarian relief agencies and civil society, including **[religious organizations]** and NGOs, have played an increasingly important role in the provision of humanitarian assistance as well as in the design, where appropriate, and implementation of programmes to address the needs of women and girls, **[including refugee and displaced women and girls in humanitarian emergencies, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations.] [Steps have been taken to reduce the availability and use of arms, in particular anti-personnel land mines, including the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.]**

13. **Obstacles:** The [changing] pattern of conflict, in particular, [intra] **[internal]** -State armed conflict, often rooted in political transition, economic dislocation, fragile civil society **[, denial of fundamental human rights] [increasing ideological extremists]** and a weakening of the State marked by **[increased military spending,]** the **[deliberate]** targeting of civilians, **[including women, children and humanitarian personnel,] [the forced displacement of people, family disintegration, the recruitment of child soldiers, foreign occupation]** and the [involvement] **[increased-role]** of non-State actors, including arms and drug dealers and traffickers in women and girls **[as well as promulgators of their sexual exploitation]** has had an adverse impact on gender equality and women's human rights. **[Armed conflict abounds in many of the poorest areas of the world, creating high levels of female-headed households in poverty.]**

[The absence, at all levels, of women from decision-making positions related to peacekeeping, peace-building, post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction presents serious obstacles.] **[In particular, no women are serving as special envoys or special representatives of the Secretary-General.]**

[Women constitute the large proportion in refugee and displaced populations.] [Lack of training of the different actors dealing with women in situations of armed conflict or refugees, as regards their specific problems, hinders their solution.]

Wide access to weapons **[including landmines]**, facilitated by the proliferation of and trade in arms, and particularly small arms, has **[not only]** further aggravated armed conflicts, **[but has also encouraged the outbreak of new armed conflicts, or its persistence, in some parts of the world.] [which have a particularly damaging effect on women and families.] [Women are still particularly affected by the consequences of the use of anti-personnel mines]**

[There are continued violations of international humanitarian law, [in particular those concerning a

release of women taken hostages in armed conflict] international refugee law and human rights, including continued violation of women's human rights.]. There has also been an increase in **[forced displacement, psychological, systematic campaigns of terror and intimidation and]** [gender-based violence, including **[systematic]** rape, **[and forced pregnancy] [which are defined as war crimes in section 7.1 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court,] [is an increasingly used strategy in armed conflicts.] and their consequences in terms of physical, physiological and mental trauma, as well as in continued sexual abuse and possible social exclusion.] [Girls are also recruited or abducted into situations of armed conflict including, *inter alia*, combatants, sexual slaves or providers of domestic services.]**

[13 alternative: Peace is inextricably linked to equality and development. Armed and other kinds of conflicts, war of aggression, colonial or other alien domination and foreign occupation continue to cause serious obstacles to the advancement of women. The continuation, and in some cases the strengthening, of unilateral coercive measures adopted by some countries against others, not in accordance with international law and the Charter, also constitutes a serious obstacle to the advancement of women, since it impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of affected countries, in particular women and children. Continuous decline in international assistance to countries, especially developing countries hosting large refugee populations, has constrained the capacity to provide appropriate services to refugees, especially women and children. Economic sanctions against some countries continue to have negative impact on women and children and adversely affect the civilian population. In several countries, economic sanctions have adversely affected the civilian population, especially women and children.

In spite of the end of the cold war era, enormous amount of resources continue to be dedicated to the development of high technology armaments, including the maintenance of huge nuclear arsenals, military alliances and nuclear deterrence policies, which are not only causes of conflict, but also an obstacle for the possible allocation of additional funds, mainly affecting women and children, depriving them of access to economic and social development.

The growing number of internally displaced persons and the provision of their needs, in particular women and children, continue to represent a double burden to the affected countries and their financial resources]

However, the **under-representation,** of women in decision-making positions **in** peacekeeping, peace-building, post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction **as well as lack of gender awareness in these areas** presents serious obstacles. Wide access to weapons, facilitated by the proliferation **and illicit** trade in arms, **has also** aggravated armed conflicts **and has had negative impact on women and children.**

F. Women and the economy

14. **Achievements**: There is increased participation of women in the labour market and subsequent gain in economic autonomy. Some Governments have introduced a variety of measures that address women's economic and social rights, equal access to and control over economic resources and equality in employment. Other measures include ratification of international labour conventions as well as enacting or strengthening legislation to make it compatible with these conventions. There is increased awareness of the need to reconcile employment and family responsibilities and the positive effect of measures such as maternity **[and paternity leave] [parental leave for sick children]**, and child and family care benefits **[and services]**. Some Governments have made provisions to address discriminatory and abusive behaviour in the workplace and to prevent unhealthy working conditions and have established funding mechanisms to promote women's roles in entrepreneurship, education and training, including scientific and technical skills and decision-making. Research has been conducted on barriers to economic empowerment faced by women including the relationship between remunerated and unremunerated work and tools are being developed to assist with this assessment.

15. **Obstacles**: The importance of a gender perspective in the development of macro-economic policy is still not widely recognized. Many women still work in rural areas and the informal economy as subsistence producers and in the service sector with

low levels of income and little job and social security. **[In some countries/Many]** Women with comparable skills and experience are confronted with a gender wage-gap and lag behind men in income and career mobility in the formal sector. Equal pay for women and men for equal work, or work of equal value, has not yet been **[fully]** realized **[everywhere/in all countries].** Gender discrimination in hiring and promotion and related to pregnancy, including through pregnancy testing and sexual harassment in the work place persist. **[In some countries, women's [equal] [access]/[rights] to ownership of and control over land and other forms of property and to inheritance is not yet recognized in national legislation.]/(alternate para. 165 (e) of the Platform for Action.)** Progression in the professions, in most cases, is still more difficult for women, owing to the lack of structures and measures that take into account maternity and family responsibilities. In some cases, persistent gender stereotyping has led to a lower status of male workers as fathers and to an insufficient encouragement for men to reconcile professional and family responsibilities. Lack of family-friendly policies regarding the organization of work increases these difficulties. Effective implementation of legislation and practical support systems is still inadequate. The combination of remunerated work and care-giving **[within the family, the household and the community]** still leads to a disproportionate burden for women as long as there is insufficient sharing of tasks and responsibilities by men. It is still also women who perform the larger part of unremunerated work.

G. Women in power and decision-making

16. **Achievements**: There has been growing acceptance of the importance to society of the full participation of women in decision-making and power at all levels and in all forums, including the intergovernmental, governmental, and non-governmental sectors. In some countries, women have also attained higher positions in these spheres. An increasing number of countries applied affirmative and positive action policies, including quota systems or voluntary agreements in some countries, measurable goals and targets, developed training programmes for women's leadership and introduced measures to reconcile family and work responsibilities of both women and men. National mechanisms and machineries for the advancement of women as well as national and international networks of women politicians, parliamentarians, activists and professionals in various fields have been established or upgraded and strengthened. **AGREED**

17. **Obstacles**: Despite general acceptance of the need for a gender balance in decision-making bodies at all levels, a gap between *de jure* and de facto equality has persisted. Notwithstanding substantial improvements of *de jure* equality between women and men, the actual participation of women at the highest levels of national and international decision-making has not significantly changed since the Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing in 1995 and gross under-representation of women in decision-making bodies in all areas, including in politics, conflict resolution **[and prevention]** mechanisms, the economy, the environment and the media **[persists/hinders]** the inclusion of a gender perspective in these critical spheres of influence. Women continue to be under-represented at the legislative, ministerial and sub-ministerial levels, as well as at the highest levels of the corporate sector and other social and economic institutions. Traditionally assigned gender roles limited women's choices in education and careers and compelled women to assume the burden for household responsibilities. Initiatives and programmes aimed at women's increased participation in decision-making were hindered by a lack of human and financial resources for training and advocacy for political careers; gender-sensitive attitudes towards women in society, awareness of women to engage in decision-making in some cases; accountability of elected officials and political parties for promoting gender equality and women's participation in public life; **[clear and transparent appointment and selection criteria for decision-making posts]**; social awareness of the importance of balanced participation of women and men in decision-making; willingness on the part of men to share power; **[sufficient dialogue and cooperation with women's NGOs, along with/the lack of adequate adaptation of organizational and political structures in order to have more women in all spheres of political decision-making/the failure to adapt organizational and political structures to make them women-friendly.**

18. **Achievements**: National machineries have been instituted or strengthened and recognized as the institutional base acting as "catalysts" for promoting

gender equality, gender mainstreaming and monitoring of the implementation of the Platform for Action **[and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.]** In many countries, progress has been achieved in terms of the visibility, status, outreach and coordination of activities of these machineries. Gender mainstreaming has been widely acknowledged as a strategy to enhance the impact of policies to promote gender equality. The goal of the strategy is to incorporate a gender perspective in all legislation, policies, programmes and projects. These machineries, despite their limited financial resources, have made a significant contribution to the development of human resources in the field of gender studies and have also contributed to the growing efforts for the generation and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and age, gender-sensitive research and documentation. Within the United Nations system, much progress has been made in the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, including through the development of tools and the creation of gender focal points.

19. **Obstacles**: A lack of **[strong political will,]** adequate financial and human resources are the main obstacle confronting national machineries. This is further exacerbated by insufficient understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming among government structures, as well as prevailing gender stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes, competing government priorities and, in some countries, unclear mandates and a marginalized location within the national government structures, **[lack of data disaggregated by sex and age in many areas and insufficiently applied methods for assessing progress]** in addition to paucity of authority and insufficient links to civil society. The activities of the national machineries were also hindered by structural and communication problems within and among government agencies.

H. Human rights [of women]

20. **Achievements**: Legal reforms have been undertaken and discriminatory provisions have been eliminated in civil, penal and personal status law governing marriage and family relations, all forms of violence, women's property and ownership rights and women's political, work and employment rights. **[In a growing number of countries legal measures have been taken to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.]** Steps have been taken to realize women's de facto enjoyment of their human rights through the creation of an enabling environment, including the adoption of policy measures, the improvement of enforcement and monitoring mechanisms and the implementation of legal literacy and awareness campaigns **[at the national and international levels/at all levels].**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been ratified or acceded to by 165 countries, and its full implementation has been promoted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol of the Convention **[allowing women to submit claims of violations of the rights protected under the Convention to the Committee] [which up to today has been signed by 37 States.]**

Progress has also been made to integrate the human rights of women and mainstream a gender perspective into the United Nations system, including into the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights **[and in the Commission on Human Rights]** [Women's NGOs have contributed to heightening awareness that women's rights are human rights **[and to generate support for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Statute of the International Criminal Court.]**

21. **Obstacles**: **[Gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular related to]** racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia **[and intolerance,] [ethnic cleansing, armed conflict and foreign occupation]** continue to cause threat to the enjoyment of women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Even though a number of countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the goal of universal ratification by 2000 has not been achieved. **[There continues to be a large number of reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, some of which are against the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with international treaty law.] [While there is an increasing acceptance of gender equality, many countries have not yet fully implemented the**

provisions of the Convention. There is a continued gap between existing legal standards and their application. Discriminatory legislation as well as harmful traditional and stereotyped attitudes still exist and family, civil and penal codes as well as labour laws still have not fully integrated a gender perspective.]/[There is an increased acceptance of gender equality, yet many countries still have difficulties in implementing provisions contained in the Convention]/[There is a continued gap between existing legal standards and their application in practice.]/[The persistence of traditional and stereotyped attitudes, has favoured that] Discriminatory legislation still exists and family, civil and penal codes, **[as well as labour laws,]** [are still not fully gender sensitive] **[still have not fully integrated a gender perspective.]**

[In some countries, gender discrimination has even been enforced by law.] Legislative and regulatory gaps persist, perpetuating **[as well as lack of implementation and enforcement, perpetuate]** *de jure* as well as de facto inequality and discrimination.

[In many countries,] Women have insufficient access to the law, resulting from **[illiteracy,]** lack of legal literacy, **[information]** and resources, insensitivity and gender bias of **[and lack of awareness of human [dignity and] rights of women by]** law enforcement officials and the judiciary and the persistence of **[harmful]** traditional and **[negative]** stereotypical attitudes.

[There is non-recognition of the reproductive rights of women and girls as human rights, as included in paragraph 95 of the Beijing Platform for Action.] [Some women continue to encounter barriers to their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health. Some women also face barriers to the enjoyment of their reproductive rights, which embrace certain human rights as outlined in paragraph 95 of the Platform for Action.] [Some women continue to encounter barriers to justice and enjoyment of their human rights because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, or status as indigenous people, migrants, displaced people or refugees or other status.]

I. Women and the media

22. **Achievements**: The establishment of local, national and international women's media networks has contributed to global information dissemination, exchange of views and support to women's groups active in media work. The development of information and communication technologies, especially the Internet, has provided improved communication opportunities for the empowerment of women and girls, which has enabled an increasing number of women to contribute to knowledge sharing, networking and electronic commerce activities. The number of women's media organizations and programmes has increased, facilitating the aims of increased participation and promotion of positive portrayals of women in the media. Progress has been made to combat negative images of women by establishing professional guidelines and voluntary codes of conduct, encouraging fair gender portrayal and the use of non-sexist language in media programmes. **(AGREED)**

23. **Obstacles**: **Negative and/or degrading images of women, stereotyped portrayals and [child] [pornography] [and other obscene materials]** have increased in different forms using new communication technologies in some instances, and **[bias against women remains in the media/in some media professions]/[some media professionals remain biased against women]. [Poverty, the lack of access and opportunities, illiteracy, lack of computer literacy and language barriers],** prevent some women from using the information and communication technologies, including the Internet. Development of and access to the Internet is limited, especially in developing countries, and in particular for women.

J. Women and the environment

24. **Achievements**: Some national environment policies and programmes have incorporated gender perspectives. **[In recognition of the link between gender equality, poverty eradication, environmental degradation and sustainable development],** governments have included income-generation activities for women, as well as training in natural resource management and environmental protection in their development strategies.] Projects have been launched to preserve and utilize women's traditional knowledge, **[in particular the traditional ecological**

knowledge of indigenous women,] in the management of natural resources, **and preservation of biodiversity.**

25. **Obstacles**: [There is [still] a lack of public awareness about environmental risks faced by women and of the benefits of gender equality for promoting environmental protection.] **[Women's limited access to technical skills, resources and information, in particular in developing countries, [foreign occupation], have impeded sustainable environmental decision-making, including at the international level. Research, action, targeted strategies and public awareness remain limited regarding the differential impacts and implications of environmental problems for women and men.]** Environmental policies and programmes lack a gender perspective and fail to take into account women's roles and contributions to environmental sustainability

K. The girl child

26. **Achievements**: [Some] progress was made in primary and, to a lesser extent, in secondary and tertiary education for girls, owing to the creation of a more gender-sensitive school environment, improved educational infrastructure, increased enrolment and retention, [support mechanisms for pregnant girls **[adolescents]** and teenage mothers **pregnancy and motherhood support mechanisms]**, increased non-formal education opportunities and enhanced attendance at science and technology classes. Increased attention was given to the health of the girl child, [including the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents]. An increasing number of countries introduced legislation to ban female genital mutilation and imposed heavier penalties on those involved in sexual abuse, trafficking, and all other forms of exploitation of the girl child, including for commercial ends. A recent achievement has been the adoption of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography by the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

27. **Obstacles**: **[Discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls, stereotypical roles and inadquate awareness of the specific situation of the girl child, child labour, including domestic child labour, the persistence of poverty and lack of finance, which often prevent her from pursuing and completing her education and training, have contributed to a lack of opportunities and possibilities for girls to become confident, self-reliant and independent.]**

[In many/some countries,] the persistence of poverty, [worst forms of] child labour, inadequate awareness of the specific situation of the girl child, domestic responsibilities **[lack of finance]**, which often prevent her from pursuing **[or completing her]** education, **[and training thus contributing]** **[have]** contributed to a lack of opportunities **[and possibilities]** for girls to **[develop self esteem and life skills necessary to]** become self-reliant and independent. **[adults in the future.] [The lack of proper parental support and guidance,] [Harmful traditional practices, including early and forced marriage, sexual exploitation and violence often result in unwanted pregnancies and/or HIV/AIDS, which may also lead to expulsion from school and educational training institutes.]** Programmes were hindered by **[**a lack of**]** **[an insufficient allocation of]** financial and human resources. There were few established national mechanisms to implement policies and programmes for the **[promotion of the]** girl child and **[and on the other hand]** coordination among responsible institutions was insufficient. **[The increased awareness of the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents has not yet resulted in sufficient provision of necessary information and services.] [Counteracting some of the advances in legal protection, there is increased sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of the girl child due to the false assumption to avoid infection with HIV/AIDS. Adolescents continue to lack [the education and service needs to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality, taking into account the rights of the child to access to information, privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent, as well as the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and legal guardians to provide, in a legal manner, consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.] [access to sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services needed to address, *inter alia*, unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases]**